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SUBJECT: GEORGIAN PERMREP ALASANIA DISCUSSES GENEVA MEETING
AND ALSO KOSOVO

¶11. (SBU) Summary: Georgian Permrep Alasania told Ambassador Wolff on February 11 that he looks forward to the Friends of Georgia meeting as an opportunity to launch a UN-led review of the Abkhazia peace process. Alasania hoped to avoid giving Russia any pretext for harmful actions. Ambassador Wolff warned that Russia's preoccupation with Kosovo might make it difficult to make progress in Geneva. Wolff advised Alasania the issue of Abkhaz participation in a Security Council session in New York might lead to a procedural vote and agreed with Alasania that a GUAM resolution focused on Kosovo would be easier for us to support than a more general one. End Summary.

Alasania's Hopes For Geneva

¶12. (SBU) Georgian Permrep Alasania told Ambassador Wolff in a February 11 meeting that he looks forward to the February 18-19 Geneva meeting of the Friends of the Secretary-General for Georgia as an opportunity to get serious in implementing confidence building measures, including moving forward on a declaration of non-use of force and return of IDPs and re-engaging with the Abkhaz side. He said he wants to discuss the UN-led review of the Abkhazia peace process and get the Abkhaz fully on board. Alasania hopes to use the Friends' meeting to rebut criticism in the latest UNOMIG report of supposed alarmist rhetoric in Georgia's media concerning Abkhaz provocations. He said he aims for the Friends' meeting to produce an acknowledgment that Georgia's security presence in the Upper Kodori Valley is at an acceptable level, as he said is stated in the latest UNOMIG report.

Kosovo/Abkhazia Link

¶13. (SBU) When asked by Ambassador Wolff for his views on Russian-created linkages between Kosovo and Abkhazia, Alasania said he did not think the Abkhaz would be foolish enough to overtly use Kosovo for their own independence aspirations, but believes Russia has not decided yet how much support to offer Abkhazia. He argued President Saakashvili's re-election gives him a new, five-year mandate for dealing with Abkhazia. Ambassador Wolff asked for Alasania's assessment of his interactions with Russia at the UN. Alasania said that he had met recently with Permrep Churkin, who wants to keep any disagreements between Georgia and Russia out of the public eye. Alasania expressed cautious hope that the meeting of Presidents Putin and Saakashvili later this month will go well. Alasania did not see prospects yet for significantly improving bilateral relations, but at least did not want "to give Russia any pretext for harmful actions."

¶14. (SBU) Ambassador Wolff warned that Russia's objective

regarding Kosovo is to keep countries from recognizing it, so they might use Abkhazia as a tool for this purpose. Ambassador Wolff underscored that because of this larger Russian objective, it might be difficult to make progress in Geneva.

Abkhaz UNSC Session and GUAM Resolution

15. (SBU) Alasania said Georgia strongly opposes Abkhaz participation in a Security Council session in New York. Ambassador Wolff warned that opposing Abkhaz participation could lead to a fight for votes on a procedural issue, so we will need to be ready. Alasania noted that he would join fellow permreps of the GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) soon for a meeting with Ambassador Wolff to ask for US support of a resolution on protracted conflicts. Alasania said A/S Fried had suggested to him recently that it would be easier for the US to support a resolution specifically focused on Kosovo's *sui generis* nature. Ambassador Wolff agreed that such a resolution would be easier to support.

WOLFF